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THE FRIDAY LETTER

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WORK FORCE DIVERSITY TEAM MAKES PROGRESS

The work force diversity task team had its kick-off meeting this past week. The team met for three full days and made significant accomplishments. All of the 14-member task team felt truly honored to have been selected from the group of 85 who applied to participate in this effort.

Melvin Fong, WRO was chosen to be the Task Team Leader. **Larry Brantley**, facilitator for the task team, asked the team to identify "if they had the opportunity to bring about change, how would they express that?" Some of the "change statements" included: "Professionalize recruitment." "Need more formal individual career development. Help people map the course of their career." "Make FNS a great place to work - provide training - make employees feel they are valuable."

Next the team began identifying human resource management areas where there are "barriers" to work force diversity. The team decided to focus on the following areas: recruitment/hiring, retention/career development, organizational culture, commitment/accountability. An example of an identified "barrier" is the lack of coordination between recruitment/hiring and the budget. When there is a window of opportunity for filling a vacancy the agency should have done their homework to be able to recruit and employ the best candidate, including minorities and women.

The task team will meet again on August 6 at headquarters. In the meantime they will be contact persons from their offices to get feedback on the four areas identified. The team members fall under the different areas as follows--Recruitment/Hiring: **Sharon Bingham**, **Melvin Fong**, **Jaime Rivera**, **Juliana Vicario**; Retention/Career Development: **Pamela Fields**, **Crayton Lankford**, **Celia Vila**, **Maurice Wade**; Organizational Culture and Commitment/Accountability: **Alfred Escoto**, **Cecilia Fitzgerald**, **Arthur Frost**, **Thomas O'Connell**, **Lynda Silva**. Talk about progress!



Melvin Fong
WRO

"...I am cognizant of recruiting and affirmative action goals, as well as 'barriers' that must be confronted."



The work force diversity task team met for the first time July 24.



Jaime Rivera
Caribbean Area Office

"...I am excited by our Agency's aggressive initiative. I also feel that I have much to contribute."

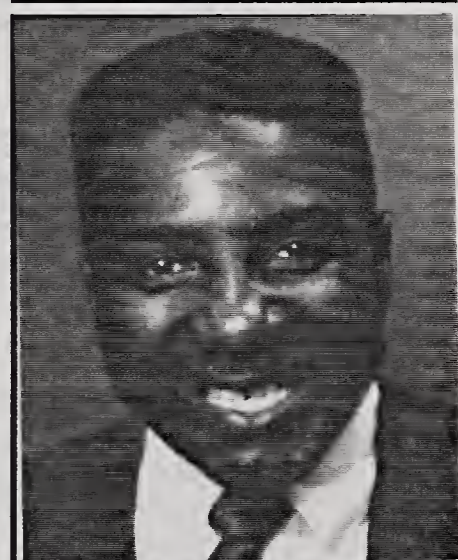
Carol Stansfield
HQ's, OGAPI

"...I have a longstanding interest in promoting economic and social equity for the disabled."



Maurice Wade
MPRO

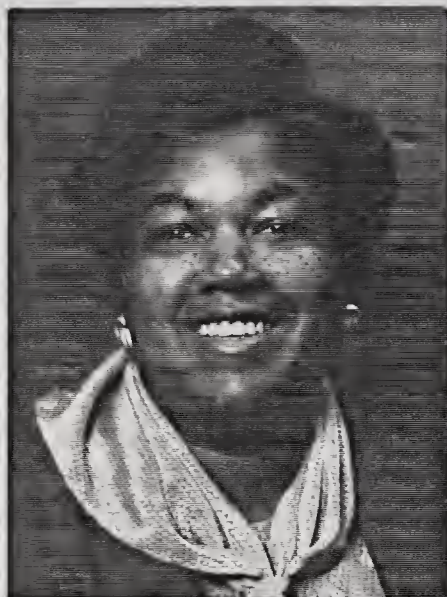
"I have studied trends, problems and issues of an EEO nature...which may result in discrimination and/or dissatisfaction among employees...this has enabled me to serve as vehicle for exchange of ideas between line staff and managers."



Thomas O'Connell
HQ's, FSP

Cecilia Fitzgerald
HQ's, FSP

"The lack of people skills continues to concern me as a supervisor."



Pamela Fields
MPRO

"I am volunteering for the work force because I know the importance of fair and equal opportunity not only for employment but for all aspects of being able to live a meaningful and productive life."

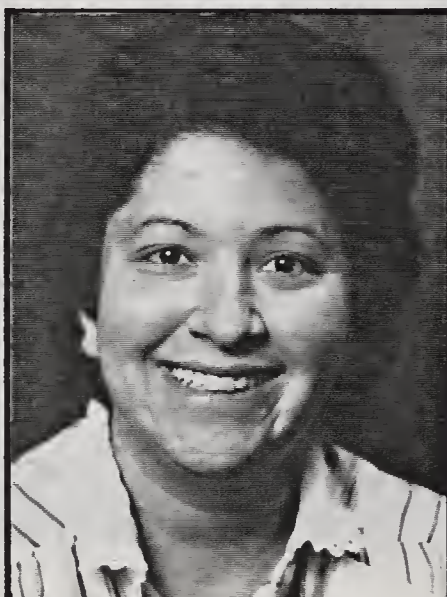


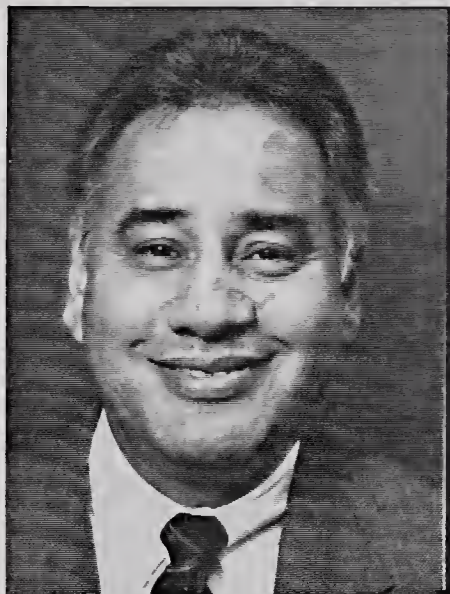
Sharon Bingham
HQ's, OAE

"...I am interested in enhancing the agency's efforts in: recruiting and hiring other African Americans for professional positions; promoting those on staff; and providing upward mobility..."

Celia Vila
HQ's, PID

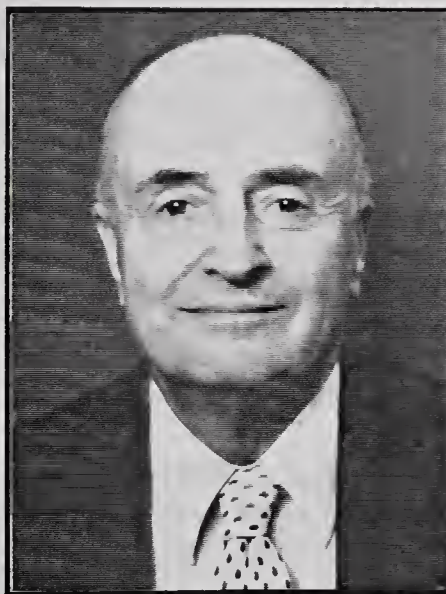
"Ten years ago I came to FNS as a GS-4 clerk typist...and have been fortunate to be able to overcome many barriers along the way to be where I am today."





Alfred Escoto
SWRO

"There is a significant need to recognize and bridge that gap that currently exists by strengthening our work force. We need to accept that the current work force is dwindling while responsibilities are increasing."

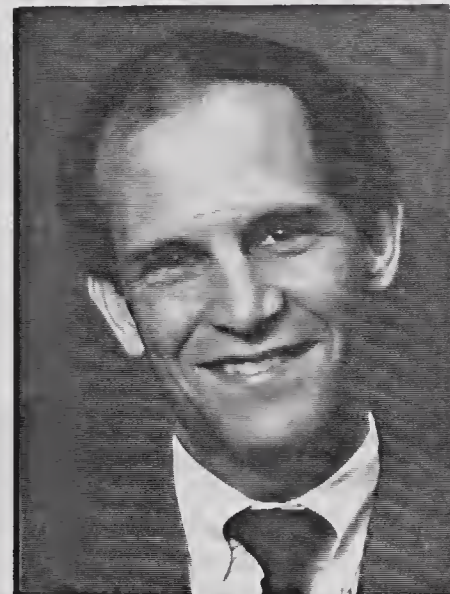


Arthur Frost
MWRO

"...I am interested in seeing all FNS employees...treated equally regardless of race, color, age, sex, national origin, disability, religion or marital status."

Crayton Lankford
SERO

"We need to do much more than just treat everyone fairly-- we need to aggressively seek qualified employees from all backgrounds and then offer them a positive organization in which to build their career."



Lynda Silva
NERO

"...I have learned a lot about the Personnel side of recruiting and have struggled with, and found some solutions to the barriers that delay or prevent timely and effective recruitment."



Juliana Vicario
MARO

"I believe that when the incorporation of a culturally diverse staff occurs, we, as a department of public assistance, will be better equipped to write and implement regulations with a personal knowledge of the people they will ultimately affect."





On The Hill

by Frank Ippolito

As the Friday Letter went to press, the Congress was still debating the Farm Bill. The Nutrition Title had not been debated in either House. In the next issue of the "new" Friday Letter, a detailed briefing will be reported.

Yeutter Appoints National Advisory Council For WIC and CSFP

On July 20, Secretary Yeutter announced ten new members selected to serve on the National Advisory Council on Maternal, Infant and Fetal Nutrition.

The 24-member Council studies the operation of WIC and CSFP and reports biennially to the President and Congress on how the programs can be improved.

Council membership covers all aspects of program operations. Members are the Departments of Agriculture and Health and Human Services officials, WIC and CSFP State and local program operators, a state fiscal officer, medical and health representatives, a non-profit

public interest organization representative; food retailers representative, special populations representatives, and WIC and CSFP parent participants.

Newly appointed members are: **James R. Nelson**, state CSFP director (Illinois); **Charles A. Anderson**, state health officer (South Dakota); **Mary Frances Lane**, WIC project director (South

Carolina); **Constance J. Betterley**, state public health nutrition director (Iowa); **Cathy Killian**, WIC parent participant (North Carolina); **Betty Landry**, CSFP parent participant (Louisiana); **Richard M. Narkewicz**, pediatrician (Vermont); **Galen Davis**, drug abuse education and prevention expert (Kansas); **Albert W. Pruitt**, M.D., alcohol abuse education and prevention expert (Georgia); **Patricia Grant Higgins**, Ph.D., R.N., breastfeeding promotion expert (New Mexico).

USDA Holds Seminar For Senior Women In Government

USDA held its first Management Seminar for Senior Women in Government, July-8-13, in Annapolis, Maryland. The seminar concept was introduced by Assistant Secretary for Administration, **Adis Villa**, to focus on women managers in USDA. The training was conducted by C&W Associates of Newport News, Virginia.

Judith Lewis, Confidential Assistant to **Betty Jo Nelsen**, attended the seminar for FNS. The seminar featured sessions on management styles, behavior types, building self esteem, networking, mentoring, the Federal Budget cycle and the legislative process.

The group also worked to develop Secretary Yeutter's initiatives on

Work Force Diversity. A panel of Senior Executive Service women from the Department discussed the workforce demands for USDA in the next 10 years, workforce trends for the future and characteristics of effective managers.

Judith will be sharing what she learned at the seminar in a series of Communication workshops to be held in conjunction with the Federal Women's Program in the Fall. If anyone is interested in attending these workshops, or if you need more information, please contact **Judith** at 756-3064.

Guess Who Was Visiting HQ's!

Regional personnel were in to visit once again for the FNS Regional Financial Management Directors Conference July 17-19. Regional attendees were:

NERO--**Doug MacAllister** and **Art LeBlanc**
MARO--**Joe Garby**
SERO--**Crayton Lankford**
MWRO--**Dusty Van Vleet** and **Sandra Slayton**
MPRO--**Jim Satler**
SWRO--**Mike McIlwain**
WRO--**Dick Mellinger**

A highlight of the conference was a panel discussion "Improving FM/WIC Program Communications and Coordination" (moderator: **David Hamer**; panel members: **Ron Vogel**, **Larry Bilm**, **Doug MacAllister** and **Dusty Van Vleet**). It was agreed that actions would be taken to help improve communications by increasing program and FM staff interaction.

The Accounting Division was commended for its successful LOC

Smartlink conversion. Reviews and updates were given by each of the FM divisions and **Carol Naughton** presented an IRMD update on projects relating to state connectivity, disaster recovery, life after CHAMPS and an update on other systems under development or refinement. The regional FMDs were able to share regional issues and concerns with one another during the conference.



Secretary to Recognize Volunteers

by John Webster

In keeping with the initiative of President **Bush** and Secretary **Yeutter**, the Department of Agriculture has established a Points of Light office staffed by volunteers. The purpose of this office is to collect submissions from all USDA agencies regarding the volunteer work performed by agency employees.

Secretary **Yeutter** has expressed an interest in recognizing each employee for their volunteer efforts with a personal letter. Information will be maintained confidentially in a computer database from which a periodic report to the White House will also be prepared. The report will be general in nature, and not contain the names or identifying information about individual employees.

Although confidentiality will be maintained with regard to the Department's report to the White House, there may be instances where the names of employees will be disclosed in presentations of letters, Friday Letter articles, etc.

If you or someone with whom you work wishes to be part of this recognition program, please submit name, position, agency, division, branch and work address and phone number along with a brief statement of the volunteer work performed to **John Webster**, Director, Public Information Staff, USDA/FNS, Rm. 819, 3101 Park Center Drive, Alexandria, VA 22302.

As Administrator **Nelsen** said, "One of the wonderful things I have found through volunteer work is that the rewards don't flow in one direction. As a volunteer, we receive a deep sense of satisfaction for having done for another, while the recipient is appreciative that someone else cares"

ganizations are in the forefront of efforts being made in all regions that reduced the Food Stamp Program's Combined Error Rate to an all-time low of 9.8 percent in FY 89.

Under the direction of MARO Regional Administrator, **Chris Martin**, Ma Pat (Mid-Atlantic Payment Accuracy Team) is the result of open commitment from top management of the State Agencies in the region to reduce error rates through better problem identification and sharing of successful solutions. A newsletter, MA Pat Reports, reports periodically on the administration of the program in all urban centers in the region. The results? An FY 1989 error rate in MARO of 8.08 percent.

AROUND



THE COUNTRY

Regional Efforts Cut Food Stamp Program Costs

MA Pat? Six Million Dollar Club? No, these are not the names of an Asian restaurant or a Realtor's sales achievement organization. In fact, these two or-

ganizations are in the forefront of efforts being made in all regions that reduced the Food Stamp Program's Combined Error Rate to an all-time low of 9.8 percent in FY 89.

Close behind, with an error rate of 8.67 percent in FY 89 is the Southeast region. **Virgil Conrad** targeted the largest counties in the region for special emphasis in reducing error rates. As it happens, each of these counties issued at least six million dollars in benefits each year. Hence, the "Six Million Dollar Club".

Through data analysis, the performance of each county is analyzed, goals for error reduction are set and monitored in cooperation with State and local agencies.

Commitment to the program, along with working groups conducting on-going studies and communicating them throughout the region provide the foundation of the "Six Million Dollar Club" that has led to SERO's current success.

In MARO, **Walt Haake** takes a leading role in the region's efforts along with support from **Ralph Picone** and **Jim Goodale**. In SERO, **Art Trotter** led the effort to establish the Six Million Dollar Club. As the club gained momentum, coordination of the region's efforts shifted to **Dick Dees**, and then to **Phil Turner**.

The bottom-line result of these two dedicated efforts in error reduction translates into a total savings of over 60 million dollars to the taxpayers of this country.

Equally as important, is the fact that benefits meant for hungry Americans are being delivered more effectively and efficiently. Our hats off to MARO and SERO for their efforts!

Assistant Secretary Bertini Addresses Illinois WIC Conference and Visits MWRO

Assistant Secretary **Bertini** addressed the seventh annual Illinois WIC conference on June 27 in Oak Brook, Illinois. The conference theme, "Meeting the Challenges of a New Decade" had nearly 700 in attendance. **Bertini's** speech was very well received and she was applauded for her announcement that FNS was re-allocating money for more food packages.

While in Chicago, **Bertini** also met with MWRO program staff.

MPRO staffer **Charlie Closs** and Special Nutrition Programs' **Bonnie Mulrhead** developed a computer program that lets two Missouri field offices use a computer link to transmit claims directly to the Mountain Plains Office to expedite reimbursement. The St. Louis and Independence field offices administer the summer program as a Regional Office-administered program. **Closs** and **Mulrhead** are excited about the possibilities this new computer program provides for improving program efficiency and making better use of Regional and field staff resources.

Food Stamp Program News

FSP Regulation-Civil Money Penalties in Lieu of Permanent Disqualification: Final Rule Ready for Publication

The **Hunger Prevention Act of 1988** amended the **Food Stamp Act** to provide the Secretary with the discretion to impose a civil money penalty (CMP) of up to \$20,000 in lieu of a permanent disqualification for retailers found to have trafficked in food coupons. Subsequently, on November 5, 1988 the **Hunger Prevention Act** was amended to



WIC Food Program Specialist **James A. Burton** (right), waves a patriotic cupcake to the amusement of a resident of the Boston Housing Authority's **Eva White Residence**. **Burton** was one of the **NERO** employees to volunteer time preparing and serving "nutritious and delicious" snacks to the elderly living in the residence.

make this provision effective October 1, 1988.

An interim rule, published on May 2, 1989, established criteria for eligibility for firms seeking a CMP in lieu of permanent disqualification for trafficking. Standards were also established for determining the effectiveness of a firm's compliance policy and program.

The final rule will be published in the Federal Register in the near future. There is only one major change between the interim rule and the final rule. Criterion 4 which deals with eligibility of a firm for a CMP for trafficking has been expanded to include a definition of the term "management" for cases in which a manager is involved in the trafficking violation(s).

As a result of the change in the final rule, some trafficking cases currently in process will need to be pulled back for re-issuance of the charge letter. A general notice will be provided to all currently authorized retailers explaining the change.

No official notification of disqualified firms, other than publication of the final rule in the Federal Register, is required. The **Benefit Redemption Division** is developing implementation guidance which will be mailed to all regional offices shortly.

CAN IT BE ? JERRY STEIN RETIRES ?

by Joe Shepherd

A milestone was passed on Friday, July 27, 1990, when **Jerome M. "Jerry" Stein**, Special Assistant to the Food Distribution Division Director, retired after more than 48 years of Federal service.

On Thursday, **Jerry's** family and his many friends and colleagues gathered at one of his favorite restaurants, the Peking Gourmet, to honor this long-time champion of the American farmer and USDA food assistance efforts here and overseas. The ceremonies were presided over by Mid-Atlantic Regional Child Nutrition Director **Bob Freller**.

Aside from some good-natured ribbing about **Jerry's** legendary eating prowess and his fondness for "feeding" his neckties at lunch, attendees praised the veteran FNS employee for his numerous contributions to improving commodity procurement and distribution operations at the Federal and State levels. While many expressed regret at the agency's loss of so many years of experience, others said they would miss **Jerry's** sunny disposition and his eternal optimism.

A scrapbook of letters was presented to **Jerry**, including ones from Agriculture Secretary **Yeutter**, House Agriculture Committee Chairman **de la Garza** and FNS Administrator **Nelsen**. Word was also received that a letter from President **Bush** was on the way. Other gifts included a new leather portfolio to replace **Jerry's** battered "government issue" briefcase, and his very own fax machine, which **Jerry** said would come in handy in the part-time consulting business he plans to pursue.

Jerry and his wife, **Rochelle**, will continue to reside in their Silver Spring, Maryland home after his retirement. The FNS welcome mat will always be out for a friendly visit from **Jerry Stein** whenever he is in the neighborhood.



EMPLOYEE PROFILE...

Carl Castle HQ's, FDD

by Wini Scheffler

In this interview, Carl chose to emphasize the hospice and its work. But a few words of introduction: Carl was born in Washington, D.C., the oldest of 14 children. He was graduated from the University of Maryland with a degree in Business Administration. He served in the U.S. Air Force for four years and has worked at FNS for the last 20 years.

"Common people doing uncommon things," is how a Presidential aide recently described the Bush Administration's Points of Light initiative. The Points of Light are Americans who exemplify the President's call to do volunteer work in their communities.

An FNS staff person making an uncommon contribution to his community is Carl Castle, a food program specialist in the Food Distribution Program. Carl works as a volunteer at the Hospice of Northern Virginia in Arlington.

The hospice movement, which cares for terminally ill people, needs volunteers, Carl says. In our society, most people feel fear or discomfort at dealing with the dying. Yet Carl has no sense that he is giving more than he receives.

He says his volunteer work has taught him to redirect his priorities to the important things in life, and to let the others go.

"When people are able to accept their death," he says, "they reflect on their lives; they get their lives in order. I've learned so much about forgive-

ness and kindness from the patients."

The hospice philosophy of care for terminally ill people helps them to live their final days in dignity and comfort, as free as possible from pain and anxiety. In most cases, the patients are cared for in their homes. The hospice where Carl works has 14 beds for patients who cannot be taken care of at home, or who have no one to care for them.

"The environment is homey and colorful; everything's not stark white like a hospital," he says.

Volunteers receive two weeks of training in the different phases of hospice operation. Those that stay spend time in different phases of the program. Carl is currently working in the acute care center. Besides caring for patients, duties may include work in the office and linen closet, changing beds, consoling families, making funeral arrangements, and follow-up care for family members.

Some patients have outlived their friends and relatives. Even sadder are the many cases in which family members do not want to be near death and avoid visiting. The hospice staff becomes family for lonely patients and sometimes comfort means just being there.

"Just stay with me, just be here," one elderly gentleman asked Carl recently.

Others need someone to talk to. A former White House electrician recalled being in charge of wheeling President Franklin D. Roosevelt to safety in case of an air raid. A retired four-star general talked about his days as an aide to Prime Minister Winston Churchill in wartime London.

"I love history, and sharing these things with them," Carl says. "All life stories have value, and I am equally

interested in hearing a man's pride in the house he built with his own hands and lived in for 40 years."

Hospice volunteers learn about the stages of dying--from denial, through anger, bargaining and depression to acceptance. Most people make the same journey and most reach serenity, Carl says. He greatly admires the doctors, nurses, staff, and volunteers who make that journey with them, with care and sensitivity.

"We should do during our lifetimes what dying people do in closing their accounts," he says. "We should set aside time to see people we care about. We should write the letters we've been putting off."

Carl plans to work full time with Hospice after he retires in several years, and he hopes to interest others in meeting this community need.

"It's just a good feeling to work there," he says.

FROM THE HEALTH UNIT

Summer Programs

AUG 7--CPR Class 9:00-1:00, Sign up in the Room 218 (need training form)

AUG 8--Blood Drive 9:00-2:00, 6th floor conference room, sign up in Room 218, 756-6000

AUG 9--AIDS film and literature, 3:00, 6th floor training room

AUG 14--Blood Drive, 9:00-2:00, 4th floor conference room, sign up on Room 218, 756-6000

AUG 15--STOP SMOKING film and literature, 10:00, 30 minutes, 6th floor training room...FREE, bring your coffee!!

LOOK FOR MORE HEALTH NEWS FROM THE HEALTH UNIT IN OUR NEXT ISSUES!! IF YOU NEED INFO THE HEALTH UNIT IS OPEN FROM 8:30-5:00 everyday!

Speaking personally...

Without trumpets or fanfare, but with lots of behind-the-scenes work in every staff office and division, the 1992 FNS budget was unveiled Thursday afternoon at a presentation before Deputy Secretary Parnell.

Officials from the Office of Budget, Planning and Analysis told me that our budget presented to them was the most "technically sound" and "creative" that they had seen from this agency in the last several years! (oh what a feeling I had inside!!!)

This to me represents the type of teamwork that I hope we can build throughout our agency...everyone pulling together to produce the most efficient and effective staff in the ENTIRE Federal Government!

We are well on our way.

Bette Go

Friday Letter Vacancy Listing by Vacancy Number

JOB TITLE	AREA OF CONSID.	SERIES	GRADE	CLOSING DATE	VACANCY NUMBER	FDD OAE
• Supvry Home Economist	(A)	GM-0493	14	09/24/90	90-H-89*	ASD
• Contract Spec.	(A)	GS-1102	12	08/06/90	90-95**	GMO
• Secretary Typing	(FNS-HQ)	GS-0318	5/6	08/06/90	90-97	CND
• Food Program Spec.	(FNS-HQ)	GS-0120	12	08/20/90	90-98	BRD
• Grant Mgmt. Spec.	(A)	GS-0501	13	08/13/90	90-99	HNIS
• Secretary Typing	(A)	GS-0318	3/4/5	08/13/90	90-100	SFPD
• Supvry Prog. Analyst	(A)	GM-0345	14	08/13/90	90-101	OGAPI
• Supvry Food Prog. Spec. (Temp promo NTE 120 days)	(FNS-HQ)	GM-0120	13	08/01/90	90-102	
• Clerk Typist	(A)	GS-0322	3/4	08/20/90	90-103	

OFFICE LOCATION

FDD - Food Distribution Division
 OAE - Office of Analysis and Evaluation
 ASD - Administrative Services Division
 GMO - Grants Management Office
 CND - Child Nutrition Division
 BRD - Benefit Redemption Division
 HNIS - Human Nutrition Information Service
 SFPD - Supplemental Food Programs Division
 OGAPI - Office of Governmental Affairs & Public Information

AREA OF CONSIDERATION

(A) - All Sources
 (FNS-HQ) - Food and Nutrition Service-HdQRS wide
 (LCA) - Local Commuting Area

* - Reannounced to extend the Area of Consideration

** - Extension of closing date and correction of Area of Consideration to All Sources - Local Commuting Area

NEW ARRIVAL...

William "Will" Eugene, born July 18, 1990 to Scott and Kate (OSEC) Neltzel

Darlene L. Barnes, Editor
David K. Warner, Desktop Designer

The Friday Letter is published every two weeks by the Public Information Staff of the Food and Nutrition Service. To update your mailing address or to alter the number of copies you receive, please mail your changes to the FNS Public Information Staff, 3101 Park Center Drive, Room 819, Alexandria, Virginia, 22302, Telephone 756-3286.

Upcoming Events...

AUGUST

1-2 Public Affairs Directors Meeting
 Alexandria, Virginia
 17 End of Savings Bond Campaign
 (don't forget to sign up!)
 19-22 American Public Welfare Association
 Food Stamp Directors' Conference
 Rapid City, South Dakota

"NEW" FRIDAY LETTER SURVEY

Since the **Friday Letter** is for ALL employees, we want to hear from you as to what you liked (or didn't like) about the last three issues of the "new" **Friday Letter**. Please fill out this survey by circling the number that most fits your feelings so that we can best respond to your needs. Once you have filled it out, just remove this page and return it to the editor. Headquarters people can just drop it in the internal mail, while regional people will have to mail or fax your responses. The appropriate fax number is FTS 756-4264. We will publish the results in a future issue of the **Friday Letter**.

	Like Very Much		It's Okay		Forget It
I like the 3-column format	5	4	3	2	1
I like the overall design/layout	5	4	3	2	1
I like the feature stories	5	4	3	2	1
I like the Employee Profile	5	4	3	2	1
I like Program News	5	4	3	2	1
I like Regional News	5	4	3	2	1
I like the people-oriented stories (e.g.--1000 Points)	5	4	3	2	1
I like the Upcoming Events info	5	4	3	2	1
I like the FNS Vacancy Listings	5	4	3	2	1
I like the Program Info Data (stat sheet)	5	4	3	2	1
I like the photos of FNS employees	5	4	3	2	1
I like news From the Hill	5	4	3	2	1
I like to hear from Betty Jo (suggestion box, speaking personally)	5	4	3	2	1
I like the Health Section Info	5	4	3	2	1

Would you like to see a new name for the **Friday Letter**? YES NO

Other suggestions: _____
